

# The Autocar Road Tests



No. 991 (*Post-War Series*)  
M.G. MIDGET PB TWO-SEATER

The Midget taking a mud section, part of the old Pilgrim's Way, near Wrotham, Kent.

SOMETIMES the truest expression of opinion upon a car which one has tested in the usual way is to say it is a machine one would like to own oneself.

Any such statement is naturally dependent upon the views of the individual expressing it, but, since the M.G. Midget is to be considered as a sports car, appealing to the more enthusiastic type of driver, it is at all events fair comment from someone who tries all manner of cars.

The PB Midget now tested is the model that was introduced just before the last Olympia Show, differing from the earlier P type in having a slightly bigger engine capacity, of 939 c.c. against 847 c.c.—a size retained for what is known now as the PA type. Besides the larger engine there are other points of difference in the PB Midget which contribute towards making it an appreciably improved car.

It would be difficult for anyone free from prejudice and at all capable of being enthused by the performance of a small sports car not to be quickly attracted to this M.G. It does so much for so little. It is almost as fast as can be used reasonably; certainly on either a long or a short journey it covers the ground just about as quickly as any type of car can, and in some circumstances more rapidly than is possible to a bigger, faster but less handy vehicle. Its acceleration is good, and it runs happily at 50, 55 and even 60 m.p.h., for the engine is smooth and will go up to a limit of as much as 5,500 r.p.m. on the indirect gears.

The acceleration shows a distinct gain as a result of the increased engine size—on paper as well as

## A Fascinating Small Sports Car : The Latest Model Shows Marked Improvements in Several Important Points

on the road. Not only is the pick-up better from the lower speeds on top and third gears, but in the middle range too, and, if recollections serve, there is

a decidedly superior feeling of power in reserve.

Those are points of far more importance than the actual maximum speed. In regard to speed figures, the state of Brooklands at present, undergoing repair as it is, prevented the proper maximum being developed in the available distance. The best that could be managed as a timed speed over a quarter-mile with the windscreen lowered and two up was fractionally below 71 m.p.h.—very definitely that is not the car's limit of speed.

This particular machine was fitted with a speedometer which showed no measurable error at 40, 50, 60 and even 70, and which was slightly *slow* at 30. It is therefore possible to say from the indications the car gave on Brooklands and its subsequent behaviour on the road that the maximum would lie around 75 or 76 m.p.h., given space in which to attain it. That is remarkable for a 9 h.p.-rated car which is flexible, tractable, and thoroughly pleasant for by-way pottering, for instance, and for the slower kind of motor-ing which often appeals.

Reference has already been made to the high speeds the Midget is capable of keeping up; indeed, about 50 m.p.h. seems a natural speed on open roads. Even without ever driving it faster than that there is a charm about the car it is difficult to express, but which no doubt partly arises from the undeniable efficiency of the small overhead camshaft four-cylinder engine.

### DATA FOR THE DRIVER

#### M.G. MIDGET PB TWO-SEATER

PRICE, with two-seater body, £222. Tax, £6 15s.

RATING : 8.9 h.p., four cylinders, o.h.v., 60 × 83 mm., 939 c.c.

WEIGHT, without passengers, 15 cwt. 2 qr. 16 lb.

TYRE SIZE : 4.00 × 19in. on knock-off wire wheels.

LIGHTING SET : 12-volt ; 9 amps at 30 m.p.h.

TANK CAPACITY : 12 gallons ; fuel consumption, 35 m.p.g. (approx.).

TURNING CIRCLE : (L. and R.) 34ft. GROUND CLEARANCE : 6 in.

ACCELERATION				SPEED	
Overall gear ratios.	From steady m.p.h. of	m.p.h. of		m.p.h.	
	10 to 30	20 to 40	30 to 50		
5.375 to 1	15½ sec.	16½ sec.	18½ sec.	Mean maximum timed speed over ¼ mile	...
7.31 to 1	10½ sec.	11 sec.	11½ sec.	Best timed speed over ¼ mile...	...
11.50 to 1	6½ sec.	—	—	Speeds attainable on indirect gears—	
19.24 to 1	—	—	—	1st	22
From rest to 50 m.p.h. through gears,	16½ sec.			2nd	37
From rest to 60 m.p.h. through gears,	27½ sec.			3rd	55-60
25 yards of 1 in 5 gradient from rest,	5½ sec.			Speed from rest up 1 in 5 Test Hill (on 1st gear) ...	18.47

Performance figures of acceleration and maximum speed are the means of several runs in opposite directions.

(Latest model described in "The Autocar" of August 30th, 1935.)

This unit has been developed to a fine pitch of performance and generally pleasing behaviour. Not only does it give a remarkable power output for its size, but it has been kept quiet mechanically and smooth for an engine of this description.

A good compromise has now been reached in the matter of the exhaust note; just sufficient remains to indicate that this is a sports and not a perfectly normal touring car, and the peak of the note is reached at about 2,500 r.p.m. No sign of pinking was evident from the engine at any time.

The PB Midget does well in running about slowly in speed-limit areas; indeed, its slow-running capabilities on top gear are extremely good in relation to the performance. Also, it shows a good ability to climb comparatively slowly on top gear on those occasions when it is not desired to rush a gradient or to rev on the gears.

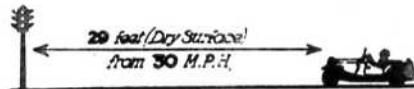
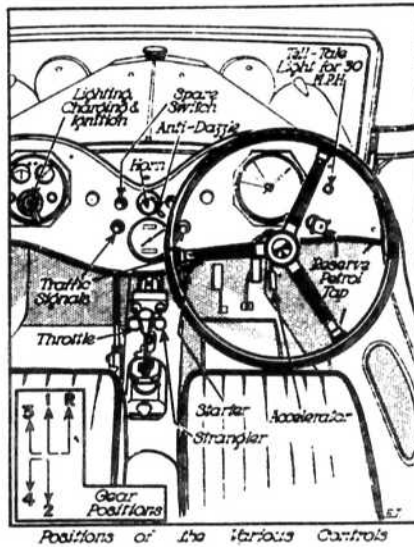
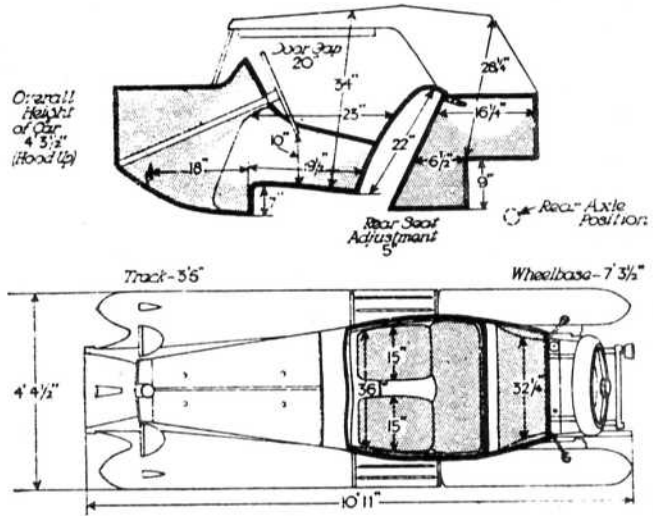
An excellent point is the provision of an amber-tinted warning lamp on the instrument board, which lights up at about 20 m.p.h. and then automatically switches out at 30 to attract the driver's attention. Especially at night this is a prominent warning, and removes any perhaps captious criticism there might be that the "30" range of the centrally mounted speedometer is apt to be obstructed from view by the steering wheel.

The separate rev counter now fitted is, however, immediately in front of the driver, and thoroughly visible. Whilst on this same subject of driving in built-up areas, it may be mentioned that, even after adjustment, the view given in the external driving mirror is not all it might be.

It is the handling of the car which gives it much of its appeal. The M.G. is low-built, of course, and it feels in "one piece"; the controls are exact, and very soon the driver is at one with the car. The driving position is right, vision is excellent, both wings being seen from the driving seat, and the big-diameter spring-spoked steering wheel comes in just the right place.

Though most satisfactorily light even when manœuvring, the steering feels firm as well in a way which is remarkably good for fast work. It is by no means unduly low-geared steering, either, for approximately one and a half turns take the front wheels from full lock on one side to full lock on the other side. There is a delightful sense of having absolute control over the car, and, within reason, the road surface, whether wet or dry, makes practically no difference to the driver's handling of it. It rides so firmly, so safely, takes bends to the proverbial inch, and is able to respond completely to the judgment of an experienced driver.

The brakes do all they should do, too, giving an excellent, regularly achieved emergency test pull-up in less



than 30ft. from 30 m.p.h., yet with little actual feeling of brakes having been applied, and without the least pull to either side. The fly-off racing-type hand lever is excellent for holding the car firmly on the steepest gradient.

One of the improvements concerns the gear change. A lighter clutch driving plate is now used, and, in conjunction with appreciably higher first and second gear ratios, the result is a gear change which can be handled really quickly on the upward movements with no more than mild noise from the teeth, or dead silently with a brief, single-clutch pause. Top and third gear ratios remain as before. This is indeed a gear change that handles beautifully as a whole.

The springing is firm to give the stability that has been mentioned, but not really harsh at any time on surfaces which are at all reasonable. There is at times fairly hard movement, this being principally noticeable in towns, but for a car of this description the riding is comfortable and at its best over the middle range of speed.

The hood, which disappears into the body, is raised or lowered and secured really easily. It is not a very natural position for the driver to have his right arm entirely inside the body. There is fair room for small luggage.

The engine has an extremely good oil filler in the top of the valve gear cover; starting is immediate. Grouped "long range" lubricators serve chassis bearings which otherwise would be awkward to reach.

A fascinating, satisfying little car.

The trim appearance of the Midget is not lost when the hood is raised.

